I asked you to my home,

... shall not rest on me,
For war hath no word of a fouler deed
Than the murder of David Creigh.

Pearl Buck Ancestral Home 100 Years Old

By SHIRLEY DONNELLY

Back there in November when I had a spell of writing about Pocahontas County and places up there, mention was made of Pearl Buck, the noted writer. This got a rise out of E. E. Ellison, Route 1, Box 61, Ronceverte. He wrote as follows:

"I notice in one of your articles in the Beckley Post-Herald that you made mention of Pearl Buck. My wife and I own and live at what is generally known as 'the old Sydenstricker home place', three miles west of Ronceverte, on Route 63. Pearl Buck's father was born in the house we live in. The great-grandfather of Pearl Buck was David Sydenstricker. He was the first Sydenstricker who was owner of this farm. According to the best I can find out Pearl Buck's grandfather's name was Absalom. Also Pearl's father was Absalom Jr. Here on this farm, great-grandfather David Sydenstricker lies buried. According to the headstone at his grave, he died in the month of March, 1848. Pearl Buck's father had six brothers and two sisters. I am sure Pearl visited this home many times in her younger days because in some of her writings she referred to it in a not very complimentary manner. This dwelling house was built more than 100 years ago, that is, the first portion of it was. Other rooms were added as the family grew larger. I have it on good authority that five of the Sydenstricker boys were ministers. Four of them were Presbyterians and one was a Methodist."

Well, that is a good letter indeed and one that is chock full of local history. Invited to call at their home if and when I get in their neck of the woods, the Ellisons can be sure they are going to have columnist company.

SAYING THAT the great-grandfather of Pearl Buck was David Sydenstricker, brings up the question of how many readers today, if any, can tell the names of their great-grandfathers.

One of the most interesting latter day hobbies is that of tracing back one's ancestry. Such are referred to often as "head hunters" —people looking for the heads of the families from which they have descended. Some times it proves embarrassing, as witness the case of the newly rich man who got someone to trace down his family history and found out his great grandmother was an old maid! Tracing back the lineage of the first families of California is said to be very revealing!

WHILE MIND IS up Greenbrier County way today, attention has been drawn to Old Greenbrier Church where those people called Baptists no longer have the pulpit in the center of the speaker's rostrum.

Someone with a flair for inquiry has asked the wherefore of this modern innovation in an old line Baptist meeting house. There in Old Greenbrier Church the pulpit is on one side of the rostrum and a lectern, or speaker's stand is on t'other. It was not ever thus. Question here dealt with today is why the pulpit is customarily in the center of the church rostrum and not why the Alderson congregation have a double-barrelled affair in their house of worship.

What is here said today is written analytically and not critically. Having the pulpit in the center of the rostrum and the Bible on it is the historical Protestant conception of what is the main thing in a service of worship. That pulpit in the center of the church with the Bible on it was the very spirit of the Reformation which was led by Martin Luther. Protestants hold that the Bible is the Word of God and is only the rule of faith and practice by which Christians are to live and mold their character. With them the sermon—the teaching of the word—is the main part of the service of worship. There in front of the pulpit is placed the Communion Table. It is the symbol of Christian fellowship.

WHEN THE REFORMATION, led by Luther, broke out in Europe, the Bible took the place of the altar. In a Baptist Church—and there is no such thing as "the" Baptist Church since it is only a Baptist denomination—there is no altar. And no mourner's bench, either.

It is in the Roman Catholic Church that one finds the altar as the thing of primary significance. This is true because that church teaches that the worship of its followers centers upon the Mass. They believe that the bread and the wine are actually transformed into the body and blood of the Lord. Since this view is held by them, Catholics believe the sacrifice of Christ is renewed each time at their Mass, through the power conferred upon the Catholic priest.

Here is one point on which Catholics and Protestants are clearly poles apart with no compromise whatever. The point being made is that with the Catholic the altar is central and with Protestants it is the Bible that is central. Crosses are seldom seen in a Baptist meeting house because these people hold the belief that the Bible, the central thing in their place of worship, contains all that the cross symbolizes. It is the historic position of Baptist churches that the commanding position of the pulpit places it in the center of the rostrum in the house of worship.

Again let it be stated, that today's offering is purely explanatory and not intended for argument—argument which tends to generate more heat than light!

WEST VIRGINIANS WHO HAVE MADE GOOD

Greenbrier-Born Pearl Buck Best Known For 'Good Earth'

By WILLIAM E. MILLER
Feature Writer For The Daily Mail

West Virginia's best known novelist, Pearl Buck, was born June 26, 1892, the daughter of Absalm and Caroline Stulting Sydenstricker in Hillsboro, Greenbrier county.

Her parents, who were Presbyterian missionaries, were spending a year in Europe and America, after a long period of hardship in the far interior of China. So it happened that she was born in West Virginia, where her mother had gone her own childhood. Her father's forebears came to America before the Revolutionary War, and her mother's from Holland and Germany in quest of religious freedom.

Pearl Buck has just published her 15th novel, "Dry, the Rebound," her first story about India and a third novel about three Americans' search for God.

Her early childhood found her back in China in the city of Chinkiang, on the Yangtze river. Most of the time she lived in a small bungalow on the top of a hill where her mother had tried to escape the ambitions of the humanities that prevailed China at that time. She learned to speak Chinese before English, but when it came time to read and write she studied English, rather than the difficult Chinese characters. Always a household highlight was the arrival of the yearly order from Montgomery Ward, and it was the privilege of each child to order an item not to exceed $1 for his own.

RETURNS HOME

It wasn't until she was nine years old that the Sydenstrickers returned to America, and Pearl had a vacation at her birthplace with her parents. Those who read 11 years older and a college student. The family spent a year here and Pearl attended the third grade in Lexington, Va. During the winter following their return to China, Pearl began her first published writing. Her mother had asked her often to write down bits of stories, tiny poems, incidents, and helped her with her ways of writing.

Her first story was published on the newspaper children's page of the English newspaper, The Shanghai Mercury. Several times she won one of the week's prizes, and today she smiles her old Chinese nurse, Wang Amah, who she claims knew more stories than any woman in the world, at having the best direct literary influence on her life. She entered the American Mission School for Chinese Girls, and during her 10th year went to the Anglo-American School in Kuling and decided to become a poet. With her prize money she bought a set of books about modern authors, wherein she read and memorized copiously. At the age of 17 she was sent to Shanghai to prepare for an American college.

When the family took their year's leave in return to America, they came through Russia, Germany, France, Switzerland and England. Pearl entered women school in Switzerland in 1909's panic and Europe. They came to Hillsboro and then to Lincoln-ton, Va., where Edwin, her wife and daughter were living, and Pearl entered Randolph - Macon Woman's college. She was Dorothy Scott by an many American girls. It was a new experience for the and later of the life of which she knew so much, and her interest in books and her ambition to write as strongly as ever. She had been an excellent student, but in her home a place in their adult lives. There were also her adopted sisters, and they longed to know her better.

EXCELLENT STUDENT

The professor at freshman English were found Pearl far surpassed the others in her preparation for work, and during her freshman year of her stories were published in the school newspaper and the college annual. Her happiest days were spent in the library. She joined Kappa Delta sorority, was elected president of the junior class and the Franklin Literary Society, won many coveted high school students and was a convenient babysitter for a small nephew and niece. After her graduation she taught for three months in the psychology department at her alma mater, but resigned to return to China to care for Carie, as the affectionately called her mother, who was ill.

She set herself to two tasks. The first was her care of Carie, the second, her study of the Chinese language.

The month of May, 1917, Pearl was married to John Lossing Buck, a native of New York state, who was in China as a young specialist in agriculture. They went to live in Suchowfoo, between Nanking and Peking, and her first experiences in the work at Suchowfoo was to start a Sunday School. Part of the time they were the only white people in the town. In March, 1921, in Nanking, she had her first child, a daughter, who was declared never to be well. Her book, "The Child Who Never Grew," published three years ago, is the experience with this child. When Carol was three months old, Pearl risked her home and came to America to see medical specialists both for herself and her baby.

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Before her return to China she adopted another daughter, Janice, who today is an exceptional flier.

PEARL BUCK . . . Turns Out Her 17th Novel

Four more children. She settled again into the routine of a busy life. Her father had retired and came to make his home with her. She began the study and translation of one of China's most famous novels, that Ho Chuan, a volume comprising over 1200 pages when it was completed, and telling the adventures of 108 major characters with an even larger number of minor ones.

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The next autumn a cable announced the manuscript had been accepted with great enthusiasm. It was named "The Good Earth", became a Book-of-the-Month club selection in March, 1931, the first of many of her books to be accorded this distinction, and was a best seller for 22 months. The following year it won her the Pulitzer Prize for Literature.

MORE BOOKS

Eighty-year-old Mr. Sydenstricker died at her home in 1931, the year his daughter wrote "Sons," the sequel to "The Good Earth," which she has often said is her favorite among her books about China. The Theater Guild chose "The Good Earth" for a dramatization, and it was produced on Broadway.

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She was back in America again June, 1936, and found that her latest book, "The Mother," published while she was in China, was selling well. When she arrived in America this time she had made up her mind to stay, she built a home near Perkasie, Pa., which was in the country, for she had

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The professor of freshman English soon found Pearl far surpassed the others in her preparation for work, and during her first year two of her stories were published in the school newspaper and the college annual. Her happiest days were spent in the library. She joined Kappa Delta sorority, was elected president of the Junior class and the Franklin Literary Society, kept busy tutoring high school students and was a convenient baby-sitter for a small nephew and niece. After her graduation she taught for three months in the psychology department at her alma mater, but resigned to return to China to care for Carie, as she affectionately called her mother, who was ill.

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The month of May, 1917, Pearl was married to John Lossing Buck, a native of New York state, who was in China as a young specialist in agriculture. They went to live in Nanksuchow, between Nanking and Peking, and her first contribution to the work at Nanksuchow was to start a Sunday School. Part of the time they were the only white people in the town. In March, 1919, in Nanking, she had her first child, a daughter, who was destined never to be well. Her book, "The Child Who Never Grew," published three years ago, is the experience with this child. When Carol was three months old, Pearl closed her home and came to America to see medical specialists both for herself and her baby.

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In June she was awarded an honorary degree by Yale university, and returned to her alma mater in Lynchburg to speak at an alumnae dinner and to drive over Droop mountain to her old American home. She found her birthplace still noble in its proportions.

In June, 1933, she sailed for Europe, the long way home to the Far East. She had learned to drive a car and was taking it to China with her. She toured extensively in England, found Sweden to be like Ohio, Denmark pretty and tidy. Holland, flat, Italy beautiful and France enchanting. She sailed from Italy to India and in October arrived in Shanghai. She had her first meeting with Lin Yutang and encouraged him to write about his country, which resulted in the publication of his book, "My Country And My People," for which she wrote an introduction.

She was back in America again June, 1934, and found that her latest book, "The Mother," published while she was in China, was selling well. When she arrived in America this time she had made up her mind to stay. She built a home near Perkasie, Pa., which was in the country, for she has

no love for a city. Many times in her childhood days she had felt

alien in China and was very conscious of being an American.

The following June 11 she was married for a second time to Richard J. Walsh, a native of Kansas, president of the John Day Publishing Co., . l editor of Asia magazine. He was the man who had accepted her first book because it was so beautifully written and because it showed such promise. That November she won the Howells Medal, given only once in five years in recognition of the most distinguished work of American fiction published during that period. It has been awarded first to Mary E. Wilkins Freeman, and second to Willa Cather.

In January, 1936, she was elected a member of the National Institute of Arts and Letters, and in that year too, "The Exile," the book about her mother, was published. "The Good Earth" was produced as a movie in 1937, starring Luise Rainer, and the picture was Irving Thalberg's last production. It was during this year that she began to write her first novel with an American setting, titled, "This Proud Heart."

WINS NOBEL PRIZE

On Nov. 10, 1938, the Associated Press reported from Stockholm, Sweden, "The 1938 Nobel Prize for Literature today was awarded to Pearl Buck, American author of The Good Earth and other novels dealing with China. She is the first American woman to be so honored."

Pearl, taken completely by surprise said at once, "That's rediculous, the report must be a mistake." She actually did not believe the news, or comment on it publicly, until her husband had called up Stockholm and had her Swedish publisher confirm it.

She knew she must go to Stockholm to accept the award, but she

rich yellow rose has been give her name.

She has a hobby of sculpturing enjoys cooking, and always cook the Sunday dinner in her household as well as the Christmas dinner Another of her recent hobbies i the establishment of "Welcom House," a child welfare organiza tion offering family home care t Asian-American children, whic she began in December, 1948. Tw Welcome Homes have been estab lished one in Dublin, Pa., anothe in Lansdale, Pa.

In these homes, children live i a warm family atmosphere, and i is intended that care for thes children will continue until they ar of age, and will include a colleg education when it is found to b warranted. Many have been place in adoptive homes. Known to al the children as "Gran," she keeps a helpful, guiding hand on all the activities of the homes which she helped to organize and maintain along with her neighbors in Bucks county.

Pearl Buck is not a Chinese woman as so many people think. She is a West Virginian of whom we are extremely proud. Few modern writers have done so much to further the common understanding of the human heart.

E. Dickson Speaks At Rotary Meetin

RONCEVERTE, Sept. 14—Edg Dickson, Second Creek farmer a authority of local history, prese ed a picture of the situation in th portion of the Greenbrier Vall in entertaining fellow Rotarians the weekly meeting

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She knew she must go to Stockholm to accept the award, but she was worried about the arrival of her sister's fourth child. It was born the afternoon before Pearl sailed. Her younger sister, Grace, is Mrs. J. B. Yankey, and now lives in Washington, D. C.

The presentation on Dec. 10, 1938, was a brilliant ceremony. Trumpets blared, curtains were drawn and Pearl was escorted to her place of honor by Dr. Per Halstrom, the secretary of the Swedish Academy. When it came time to receive the award, which seems the longest few minutes of her life, she learned that the prize had been awarded for all of her work with special emphasis on biographies, not for a single book, which delighted her indeed. She walked to the king, made her curtsy, shook hands, and received her citation and a box containing a gold medal.

What made it all so difficult was the fact that on the return to her place on the platform she had to walk backwards over what was

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Arch Edgar was 50 years old century ago, Dickson said, and w owner of the lands in and abo Ronceverte. He operated a m about where the home of R. Austin now stands. He called the "St. Lawrence Estate," and t St. Lawrence Ford was at t riffle back of Honaker's Store.

Arch Edgar had two sons wh later served in the Confedera Army. Dick Prry's mother w an Edgar descendant and th property in West Ronceverte h not changed hands.

A century ago there were ni grist mills and two woolen mil on Second Creek. The prese Nickell's Mill was a center of a tivities. Some other promine families around Ronceverte l years ago were Manns, Persinge Erwins, Johnsons, Massies a Levels.

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What made it all so difficult was the fact that on the return to her place on the platform she had to walk backwards over what was seemingly acres of deep Oriental rugs — and she didn't miss her seat! This was followed by a dinner at which her host was the crown Prince. The next morning she delivered a speech at the Swedish Academy, attended a tea and then a dinner at the King's Palace. Before she left Sweden she was entertained by the Swedish-American Society.

WVU HONORED HER

"The Patriot" was published in 1939, and she was again at Randolph-Macon to join old friends and Phi Beta Kappas at their annual celebration. Last year she was the principal speaker at the inauguration of a new president at Randolph-Macon. West Virginia university presented her with the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters at the 1940 commencement exercises. She took active leadership

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Her writing has continued unin-terrupted. She spends the morning hours at her typewriter. She loves her flowers, and in her honor a

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West Virginia's Pearl Buck Can't Purchase Ancestral Home

BY HAROLD LAMBERT
(Division of Education—
Counservation Commission)

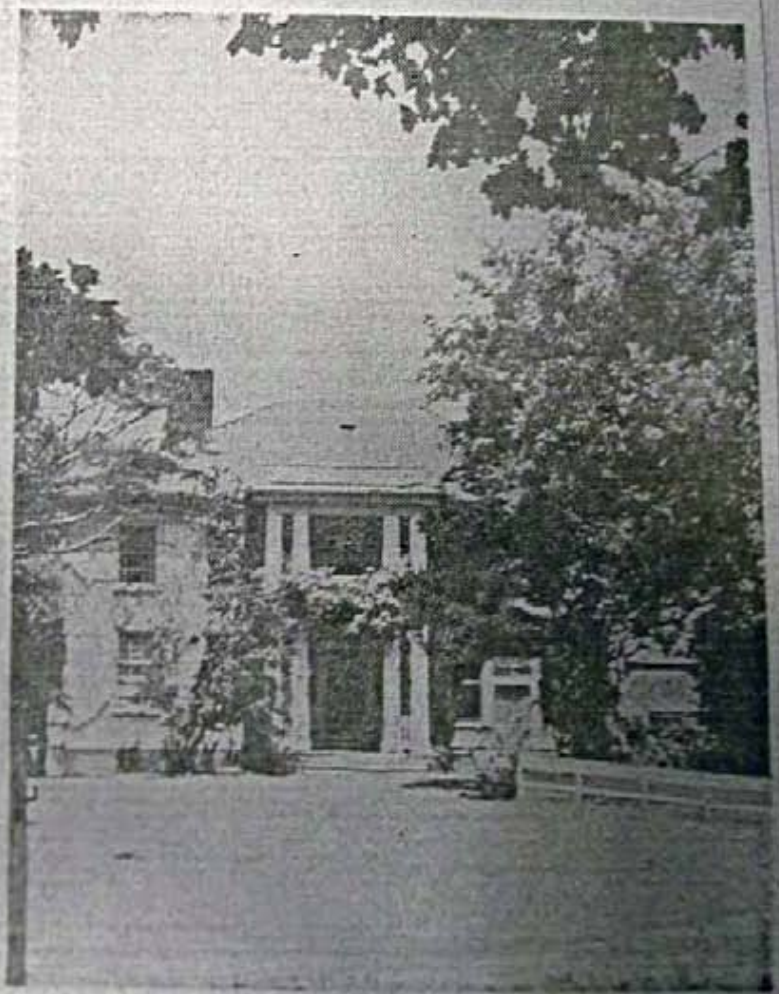
HILLSBORO — A 96-year-old frame house located on "Main Street" here is the birthplace of West Virginia's most distinguished novelist.

The Stulting homestead, now the John Edgar house, was the setting for Pearl Buck's birth in 1892. At the time, her parents were on furlough from missionary service in China.

The house stands in perfect repair today, the home of the Edgars, prosperous Pocahontas county farmers and stockmen who make their living from the 1100-acre 'plantation'. Broad level fields produce magnificent West Virginia grain, and the pastures are ideal for sheep and cattle. "It's a fine farm," John Edgar says with pride. "One of the best. . ."

West Virginia's gift to modern-day literature was the daughter of Absalom and Caroline Sydenstricker, transplanted Pocahontas Countians who saw their mission in life in bringing Christianity to the heathen of the orient. As an infant, Pearl was taken back to China where she spent her girlhood years. "Her childhood was spent listening to her mother relate tales of her own girlhood in the beautiful hills of West Virginia," says one biographer.

The 12-room house, a colonial type structure of West Virginia hardwoods, inspired Pearl Buck to say of its construction, "the wood they took from their own lands and each of the labor as they could not supply themselves they exchanged." She had reference to her Holland-born forebears who first settled here in Hillsboro. The Stultings were frugal folks and they built a sturdy house; alone houses nearby have not done nearly so well with the years. Inside the house beautiful walnut paneling is still proudly displayed by John Edgar, who has filled the bookshelves with his own volumes—mostly the hardware type literature that is so popular in this section of the state. A full set of "Lan-



BIRTHPLACE of Pearl Buck, internationally known author of "The Good Earth" and other best selling novels, is this house now owned by John Edgar, Hillsboro. Located in the wide lush farming section of the Greenbrier Valley, this homeplace is a part of an 1,100-acre plantation which is actively and successfully farmed today. Pearl Buck revisited the scene four years ago with an idea toward buying the farmstead—but was told that the Edgar's planned to keep it as their own. The house was built in 1858.

(Conservation Commission Photo)

PEARL BUCK IN LEWISBURG

Pearl Sydenstricker Buck, noted authoress, and her husband, R. J. Walsh, a prominent New York publisher, were visitors in Lewisburg Tuesday.

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"The Yankees just about ruined us at one time," John Edgar says. "We had to rebuild everything."

However, the house remained intact. Today it is brightly painted and in splendid condition.

Pearl Buck remained in China with her missionary parents until she was 17. Then she was sent back to attend Randolph-Macon College (for women) in Lynchburg, where she was president of her class. In 1914 she received her Bachelor of Arts Degree. Later she was to attend Cornell University (1926), Yale University, and the University of West Virginia.

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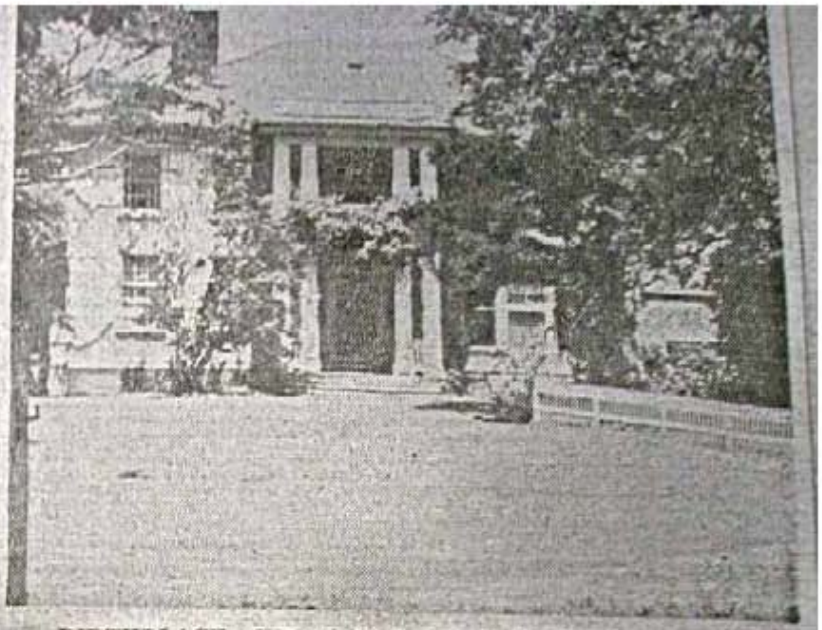

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The present Mrs. Walsh, who first became famous with her best-selling book "The Good Earth," drove up to the county library in Lewisburg in a large automobile with a chauffeur, and with her husband went into the library. She didn't reveal her identity but asked a number of questions about the county and Lewisburg—and signed the register, "Mr. and Mrs. R. J. Walsh."

She was born in Hillsboro, her father being a Methodist minister at that time and later a missionary to China, where Mrs. Walsh found a fertile field for her literary talents.

Her marriage to Mr. Walsh is her second.

Catalpas Blooming

As this is written the catalpa trees at Upson Downs are blooming in all their glory. Some people don't like catalpa trees. That is easy to understand because there

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In 1925, Pearl Buck's "A Chinese Woman Speaks" appeared in the magazine Asia. From then on her literary career was established. She won the Pulitzer prize for literature in 1933 for "The Good Earth." And in 1938 she was the first woman ever to receive the Nobel Award for Literature. Her

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life in China has been replete with adventure and excitement (once she escaped capture by bandits by only a few hours).

Four years ago Pearl Buck revisited Pochahontas County with her six children, four of whom are adopted. At that time she asked about purchasing the old Stulting homestead, but was told that the Edgar's planned to keep it as their own.

"She is a wonderful woman," John Edgar says.

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are some people who ought to be in the asylum, as they used to say. Perhaps some of my older readers, if any, can remember the long, spikey growths that the catalpha tree produces a little later on. It was long ago told me that these were formerly called "Indian stogies." Word had it that when the Indians were short on tobacco they would gather these long thickies off the catalpa tree and dry them. After they were dried the Indian smoked them in place of smoking the weed, hence the designation of "Indian stogies."

At least we heard it out there in the country where **I growed.** Old folks used to describe a cigarette as "A fire at one end and a fool at the other."